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ABSTRACT

The 4MAT system (an eight-step cycle of instruction that combines four learning style types and students' preferences for right-brain or left-brain modes of learning) can guide instructors in planning teaching strategies to meet students' diverse learning needs. Each of the eight steps of the system emphasizes one of the learning types and alternatives from right- to left-mode information processing. The eight steps are: (1) create an experience or connect to past experiences; (2) analyze the experience; (3) integrate reflections into concepts; (4) define concepts; (5) try out concepts; (6) extend learning; (7) have students evaluate their own applications; and (8) integrate application and experience. After a communication instructor used the system to develop teaching strategies for numerous units of study, she noted an increase in student interest and better overall student performance. One such unit teaches students how to prepare effective call-to-action persuasive speeches and consists of four "quadrants" that: connect new concepts/processes with personal meaning to create a reason for learning; correlate learners' previous experience with concept formulation; provide students with an opportunity to practice and personalize the new concepts; and allow students to take action, teach themselves, and share what they have learned with others. (Four figure representing various aspects of the 4MAT system are included. (Contains 13 references.) (RS)

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USING THE 4MAT SYSTEM LEARNING STYLES MODEL TO TEACH PERSUASIVE SPEAKING IN THE BASIC SPEECH COURSE

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Respect for diversity in higher education requires that instructors consider the unique and various learning styles of those who sit in their classrooms. Although some might argue that at the university level it is an impossible task to personalize education and teach to a variety of learning styles, this is not true if one uses a learning style model that takes into account major learning differences and guides one in developing teaching strategies that account for those differences. Bernice McCarthy's (1980, 1987) 4MAT System is an example of such a model that can be used at the college level.

The 4MAT System, an eight-step cycle of instruction, is theoretically based upon David Kolb's (1976, 1984, 1985) four learning style types. In addition, it draws upon research from the fields of education, psychology, neurology, and management, including theorists such as Carl Jung (1923), Jean Piaget (1970), John Dewey (1958), Joseph Bogen (1969, 1975), Gabriele Rico (1983), Betty Edwards (1979), and John Bradshaw and Norman Nettleton, (1983).

McCarthy (1990) points out that there are two major differences in the way people learn: they must both <u>perceive</u> and <u>process</u> new information. Some students <u>(1) perceive</u> (take in) new

information by (a) becoming insightfully aware or feeling it first, while others prefer to (b) analyze and think about it first. Some students (2) process new information (make it a part of themselves) by (c) reflecting or watching, while others prefer (d) doing or active experimentation. According to McCarthy (1990), "When these two dimensions of perceiving and processing are juxtaposed, a four-quadrant model is formed" which "delineates the qualities of four major learning styles" (52) (see figure #1). The four major learning styles, the teaching strategies associated with each learning style quadrant, and the teacher role that best directs each learning type is summarized below (also see fig.2):

Type One or Imaginative Learners perceive by feeling (insightful awareness) and process by reflecting. These students seek personal meaning when they learn. In the college classroom these students prefer teaching strategies that emphasize discussion, interpersonal interactions in the classroom, and activities that link new concepts with previous experiences. (The instructor acts as a facilitator.)

Type Two or Analytic Learners perceive by analyzing and process by reflecting. These students seek intellectual comprehension when they learn. In the college classroom, these students prefer well-organized lectures that include details of expert opinions and theory. (The instructor acts as the traditional lecturer.)

Type Three or Common Sense Learners perceive by analyzing and process by doing. These students seek solutions to problems when they learn. In the college classroom, these

students prefer hands-on-experiences, application-type exercises, and testing theories to see if they work. (The instructor acts as a coach.)

Type Four or Dynamic Learners perceive by feeling (insightful awareness) and process by doing. These students seek hidden possibilities in concepts and applications when they learn. In the college classroom, these students prefer to learn by trial and error, teaching others, and applying what they are taught in some new and exciting way. (The instructor acts as an evaluator and mentor.)

McCarthy also incorporates students' preferences for right-brain or left-brain modes of learning (from Bogen, 1969) into each quadrant in her 4MAT System model. Students with a left-brain preference for learning prefer an analytic, systematic, sequential, and looking-at-the-parts approach to learning new material; students with a right-brain preference for learning prefer a global, visual, intuitive, and whole-picture approach to learning new material. When the left-brain and right-brain preferences are added to the four quadrants (learning types) an eight-step model emerges. This model or "4MAT System Cycle of Instruction", as it is also called, can guide instructors in planning teaching strategies that will meet the diverse learning needs of most students in a classroom. Each of the following eight steps of the 4MAT System model emphasizes one of the learning types and

alternates from right- to left-mode information processing (see figure #3):

1. Create an experience or connect to students past experiences (Type 1 Learner, Right Brain Mode).
2. Analyze the experience (Type 1 Learner, Left Brain Mode).
3. Integrate reflections into concepts--visualize concepts (Type 2 Learner, Right Brain Mode).
4. Define concepts--traditional lecture (Type 2 Learner, Left Brain Mode).
5. Try out concepts--hands-on-experience or supervised practice (Type 3 Learner, Left Brain Mode).
6. Extend learning--students mess around with the concept, practice and add something of themselves (Type 3 Learner, Right Brain Mode).
7. Evaluate their own application--students analyze usefulness, relevance, and originality of a final project (Type 4 Learner, (Left Brain Mode).
8. Integrate application and experience--students complete a final project and share what they've accomplished in the class (Type 4 Learner, Right Brain Mode) (McCarthy, 1990, 33).

Using this model allows all learners to be comfortable in their preferred learning style and brain processing mode, yet challenges all to learn in new ways (McCarthy, 1990).

Teaching Persuasion Using the 4MAT System Cycle of Learning

I have used the 4MAT System model to develop teaching strategies for numerous units over the past year. I have noted an increase in student interest and better overall student performance since I started using this eight-step cycle as a guide to classroom

decision-making. The following persuasion unit lesson plan is one example of how I use the 4MAT System model. (See Figure #4 for a concise summary of the unit using 4MAT.)

UNIT: PERSUASION--CALL-TO-ACTION SPEECHES

UNIT GOAL: To teach students how to prepare effective call-to-action persuasive speeches using the motivated sequence and motive appeals.

QUADRANT 1: The purpose of this quadrant is to connect new concepts/processes with personal meaning for the student and create a reason for learning. The Type One Learner is most comfortable in this quadrant.

1. RIGHT-BRAIN MODE=CREATE AN EXPERIENCE/CONNECT TO PERSONAL LIFE.

OBJECTIVE: To create an awareness for students of how persuasion operates and impacts their everyday lives.

TEACHING STRATEGY/ACTIVITY: Ask each student to list or describe the observable characteristics/techniques of an effective persuasive person engaged in a persuasive event. (i.e., Ask the students to consider the time when a commercial, a salesperson, a friend, a family member, a politician, or a teacher persuaded them to do something or believe something. What characteristics of the person or steps in the process made the persuasive process successful?)

2. LEFT-BRAIN MODE= ANALYZE THE EXPERIENCE.

OBJECTIVE: To help students analyze the important phases and steps in the persuasive process.

TEACHING STRATEGY/ACTIVITY: Divide the class into groups of 3 to 4 students. Give each group one large sheet of blank newsprint and a magic marker. Ask each group to share their individual lists and to make one large persuasive characteristics/techniques list, categorizing similar characteristics. Reconvene the class as a whole. Ask each group to tape their newsprint list to the wall and to summarize their group discussion of each step on the list. (The teacher should become more active and help bring out the important methods of persuasion, motive appeals, and steps in the persuasive process.)

EVALUATION: Teacher observation of student participation, quality of discussion and lists.

QUADRANT TWO: The purpose of this quadrant is to correlate learner's previous experience with concept formulation and to teach concepts and theories. The Type Two Learner is most comfortable in this quadrant.

3. RIGHT-BRAIN MODE=INTEGRATE REFLECTIONS INTO CONCEPTS.

OBJECTIVE: To give students an opportunity to integrate their previous discussion and reflections into the concept of motive appeals and process of Monroe's Motivated Sequence.

TEACHING STRATEGY/ACTIVITY: Students view a videotape of the

television commercials, public affairs programs, or political speeches. Instructor asks students to identify the motive appeals and structure/design used in the videotaped messages that contribute to effectiveness.

4. LEFT-BRAIN MODE=DEVELOP THEORIES AND CONCEPTS.

OBJECTIVE: To teach motive appeals and structure for call-to-action speeches.

TEACHING STRATEGY/ACTIVITY: Students read assigned text chapter. Instructor lectures on the approaches to persuasion, the types of persuasive speeches, motive appeals, and the motivated sequence design for call-to-action speeches and refers to the students' persuasive techniques/characteristics lists. Teacher leads a discussion on the concepts that were part of the assigned reading.

EVALUATION: Students take a quiz over the concepts presented in the text and lectures.

QUADRANT THREE: To provide students with an opportunity to practice and personalize the new concepts. The Type Three Learner is most comfortable in this quadrant.

5. LEFT-BRAIN MODE=WORK ON DEFINED CONCEPTS (REINFORCEMENT AND MANIPULATION).

OBJECTIVE: To give students an opportunity to practice preparation of a call-to-action speech.

TEACHING STRATEGY/ACTIVITY: Divide the class into groups of 4 to 5 students. Give each group a motivated sequence format handout and a list of suggested topics (e.g., Levi Jeans, Electric Cars, Lighted Tennis Shoes, Colored Peanut Butter, Electric Ear Muffs, A Dating Service, A Cleaning Service, or any real or fictional product, etc.). Ask students to plan a salespitch mini-speech for the topic using motive appeals and the motivated sequence ("making-up" examples, statistics, and testimony, as needed). Ask each group to role play the salespitch using those steps, while other students evaluate the effectiveness of the approach (Dwyer, 1994).

6. RIGHT-BRAIN MODE="MESS AROUND" (STUDENTS ADD SOMETHING OF THEMSELVES).

OBJECTIVE: To give students an opportunity to synthesize and personalize the material.

TEACHING STRATEGY/ACTIVITY: Students brainstorm ideas and begin planning individual formal persuasive speeches using the motivated sequence as the structure.

EVALUATION: Students hand in a specific purpose statement, central idea, and ideas for main points for instructor to evaluate.

QUADRANT FOUR: The purpose of this quadrant is to allow students to take action, teach themselves, and share what they have learned with others. Type Four Learners are most comfortable in this quadrant.

7. LEFT-BRAIN MODE=ANALYZE APPLICATION OF THE CONCEPTS FOR USEFULNESS AND ORIGINALITY.

OBJECTIVE: To help students increase their ability to plan a successful call-to-action speech.

TEACHING STRATEGY/ACTIVITY: Students complete outlines for their formal speeches. They exchange outlines, examine for motive appeals and persuasive structure, and suggest revisions. Students redesign and practice their speeches.

8. RIGHT-BRAIN MODE=STUDENTS APPLY WHAT THEY HAVE LEARNED TO NEW EXPERIENCES, DO IT, AND SHARE IT WITH OTHERS.

OBJECTIVE: To give students an opportunity to demonstrate what they have learned and to evaluate learning.

TEACHING STRATEGY/ACTIVITY: Students give their formal call-to-action speeches to the class. Students give feedback to speakers using a peer evaluation form. Each student writes a personal evaluation of his/her speech.

EVALUATION: Instructor grades formal speeches for use of motive appeals, the motivated sequence, supporting material, credibility appeals, delivery, and language.

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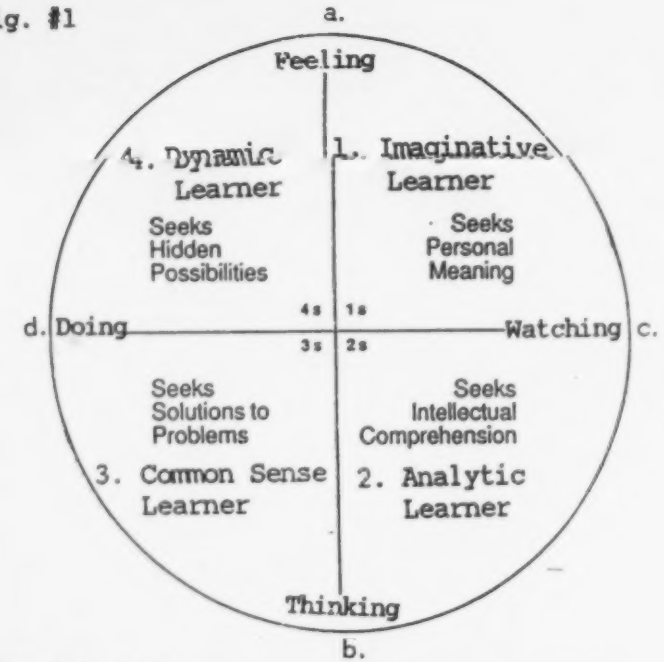
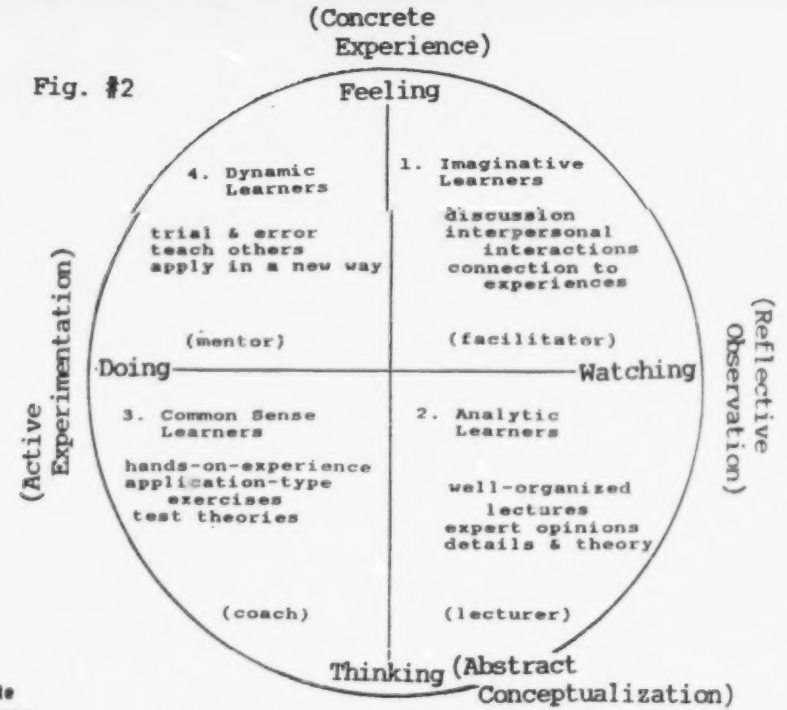
Fig. #1



The 4MAT System Four Learning Style Quadrants and Learner's Motivation for Learning

Fig. #2



Appropriate Teaching Strategies (& Instructor's Role) for each quadrant in the 4MAT Model

Fig. #3

The Complete 4MAT System Model Cycle of Instruction (McCarthy, 1987, p. 122)

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Fig. #4 **THE COMPLETE 4MAT SYSTEM MODEL**

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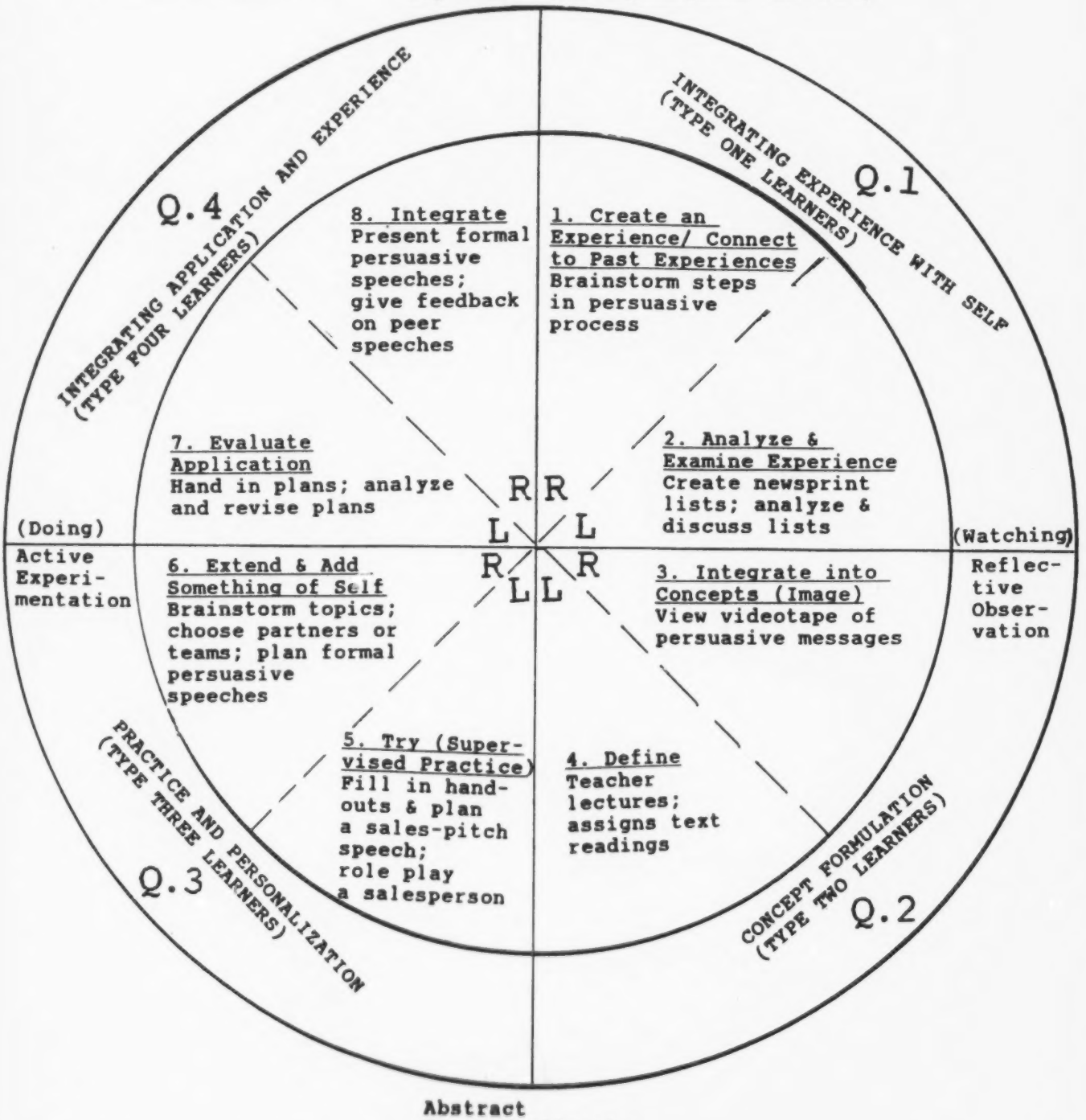
Public Speaking:
Call-to-action
persuasive speeches

PLACE TO BEGIN

Lesson Plan by:
Karen Kangas Dwyer



AN EIGHT-STEP CYCLE OF INSTRUCTION